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## THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY

THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY is a training monastery and retreat centre following the Soto Zen Buddhist tradition. The Priory is affiliated with Shasta Abbey whose Spiritual Director is Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C. Shasta Abbey is the headquarters of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives of the Soto Zen Church and is located in Mount Shasta, California. The monks of Throssel Hole Priory are members of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives and follow the teaching and example of Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett.

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THE JOURNAL OF THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY is published as a service to all those who are seriously interested in the practice of Buddhism. Through the Journal, members and friends of the Priory are able to share their experience and understanding of Buddhist training. Opinions expressed in each article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Abbot, the Editor, or Throssel Hole Priory. The Journal is published quarterly and costs £7.00 p.a.

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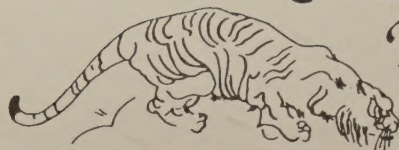
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# News from the Tiger's Lair



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## '... And to the source kept true.' Part 4

In a day and age when our perception of relationships to each other is in a state of flux and attachments to friendships are frequently viewed confusedly, some clarification is necessary with regard to how the Buddha Himself advised members of the Sangha concerning this matter. The following is taken from the translation of the *Gradual Sayings* (the *Anguttara-Nikaya*), translated by E.M. Hare and published by the Pali Text Society, London, 1973. This particular passage is to be found in Volume III, pages 196-7.

§ x (250) Devotion to one person.

'Monks, there are these five disadvantages of devotion to one person. What five?

Monks, when a person becomes very devoted to a person and that person falls into an error such that the Order suspend him, then he will think: "The Order has suspended him who is dear

and lovely to me!" And he will be no more full of devotion for the monks, and from being without that devotion he will not follow other monks, and from not following other monks he will not hear Saddhamma, and from not hearing Saddhamma he will fall away from Saddhamma. This, monks, is the first disadvantage of devotion to one person.

Or when a person becomes very devoted to a person and that person falls into an error such that the Order make him sit on the outskirts (of a gathering) [i.e. the gaitan, J.K.], then he will think: "The Order has made him sit on the outskirts (of a gathering), he who is dear and lovely to me!" And he will be no more full of devotion for the monks, and from being without that devotion he will not follow other monks, and from not following other monks he will not hear Saddhamma, and from not hearing Saddhamma he will fall away from Saddhamma. This, monks, is the second disadvantage of devotion to one person.

Or when a person becomes very devoted to a person and that person has gone to a distant place, then he will think: "He has gone to a distant place, he who is dear and lovely to me!" And he will be no more full of devotion for the monks, and from being without that devotion he will not follow other monks, and from not following other monks he will not hear Saddhamma, and from not hearing Saddhamma he will fall away from Saddhamma. This, monks, is the third disadvantage of devotion to one person.

Or when a person becomes very devoted to a person and that person wanders (in mind), then he will think: "He has wandered (in mind), he who is dear and lovely to me!" And he will be no more full of devotion for the monks, and from being without that devotion he will not follow other monks, and from not following



other monks he will not hear Saddhamma, and from not hearing Saddhamma he will fall away from Saddhamma. This, monks, is the fourth disadvantage of devotion to one person.

Or when a person becomes very devoted to a person and that person is dead, then he will think: "He is dead, he who was dear and lovely to me!" And he will be no more full of devotion for the monks, and from being without that devotion he will not follow other monks, and from not following other monks he will not hear Saddhamma, and from not hearing Saddhamma he will fall away from Saddhamma. This, monks, is the fifth disadvantage of devotion to one person.

Verily, monks, these are the five disadvantages of devotion to one person.'

One of the worst times when these disadvantages come up is when the master dies and members of the priesthood do not necessarily want to follow the newly elected abbot of the monastery or, perhaps, do not find anyone whom they feel they can follow because of their devotion to their former master. It is then very important to be careful to avoid following personalities rather than continuity of teaching. If a new master keeps true to the source, as Dogen says, 'Do not consider his caste, his appearance, shortcomings or behaviour. Bow before him out of respect for his great wisdom and do nothing whatsoever to worry him.'

In the case of death, there is also something else that is usually not talked about much and that is that it is a lot easier to follow a dead master than it is a live one. It is doubtful if Christianity would have flourished in the way it has if Jesus Christ had stayed alive a lot longer. With a live master who is really doing his or her job the teachings grow in profundity and continue to expand in that profundity whilst staying true to the source. Trainees may or may not like the way in which the teachings expand as the teacher reveals more and more of the results not only

of his own understanding, but also of his own training within the Precepts. A dead master leaves people with his last teachings and trainees, having accepted them, no longer have the opportunity of disagreement therewith. Unless a trainee is exceptional, at the death of a master that trainee's training can stagnate.

There is also the fact that a live master can, at any time, with the best of intentions, make a mistake in training since Zen masters, just as much as everyone else, are bound by the law of karma and, unless trainees have been taught to learn from a master but not copy his mistakes, they can become highly judgemental of the master's actions and start breaking the Precepts themselves as a result of their judgementalism. If a trainee thoroughly understands what it is to be a member of the Order, he or she will understand that, through judgementalism, whether one is judging the master, a friend, the Order or anyone or anything else, he or she is damaging his or her own training and, as this passage says, he will be 'no more full of devotion for the monks' (i.e. he will have doubts), and from being without that devotion, he will not follow other monks nor hear Saddhamma. Eventually he will fall away from Saddhamma and leave the Order.

There are two big lessons to be learned here. One is to avoid taking sides---i.e. becoming judgemental, in anything connected with other members of the Order---above all, a trainee must avoid this. If the Order feels that it will help a member of the Order if that member is suspended, or if the Order requires him or her to sit on the *gaitan* or asks him or her to go to a distant temple, then there must be sufficient trust in what the Order decides and care must be taken to prevent the ripples that judgementalism can cause. For example, we have seen in recent years some teachers make mistakes in morality. These have caused some of their friends, acquaintances and disciples not only to regret their trust in these teachers, but to doubt the teachings of Buddhism. It is important to know that, just because one or two teachers make mistakes (and whilst we are human we are all occasionally going to



make them, especially if we have not been taught the importance of the Precepts in as much detail as we should have been), we must remember not to blame the Three Treasures, Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha (i.e. lose faith in the Buddha, think of the teachings as just some pretty noises, and mistrust the rest of the priesthood) simply as a result of what one or two people have done. Buddhism is far, far greater than the individual and the Sangha is a far greater true friend than can be understood through the emotionalism of attachment to any one person.

The second lesson to be learned is the incredible danger of despair. Many people make the mistake not only of judging their religion by the actions of stray individuals, but also of allowing themselves to get into a state of despair and cynicism as a result of the erosion of their faith in the Buddha and His teachings. Despair and cynicism can set in as a result of boredom in training, as well as disappointment, when the teacher does not live up to one's personal expectations. Despair and cynicism, however, should be recognised for what they really are and that is: radical signs of an unsatisfied self. When I first went to the Far East I was told not to expect too much, and later I was told to expect nothing. I then realised that I needed to equate expectation with attachment. As long as I expected something I was attached to getting something, and as long as I had that I would look at my teachers and others around me with a discriminative eye. Discrimination can be good; it can also be diabolically bad. To discriminate by means of comparing this and that, and preferring this and that, leads directly to judgementalism which leads directly to cynicism and despair. When we discriminate in such a way as to realise that sometimes a master or teacher exhibits his Buddha Nature fully and sometimes makes mistakes, and we still understand that these mistakes come out of being human, we learn from that master whilst not copying his or her mistakes. This is to understand the rightful use of discrimination. Many mistakes taught to people in England and America in recent years have come out of the fact that those doing



the teaching did not satisfactorily comprehend the English language whilst one or two have come out of genuine charlatanism; all religions have the latter and Buddhism certainly has its share.

From this *Gradual Saying* it would appear that having friendships in a monastery is totally unwise. In Christian monasteries, as I understand it (and I could be wrong here), they are definitely discouraged. The fact remains, however, that the Buddha actually said something about how to have friends in monasteries and the attitude of mind to be adopted to them. This again comes from the *Gradual Sayings* (the *Anguttara-Nikaya*), translated by E.M. Hare, from the Pali Text Society, London, 1978. This is from Volume VI, p. 18:

S v (35) Friends.

'Monks, let a monk cultivate a friend whose ways are seven. What seven?

He gives what is hard to give, does what is hard to do, bears what is hard to bear, confesses his own secret, keeps others', in want forsakes one not, despises not when one is ruined.

Verily, monks, let a monk cultivate a friend whose ways are such.

He gives things hard to give, does what is  
hard,  
Hard words to bear he bears, his secret  
tells,  
But others' secrets keeps, in times of want  
Forsakes you not, when ruined ne'er contemns:  
In whom are found these ways, that is the  
friend  
To cultivate if any need a friend.'

From this will be seen a very great difference in attitude of mind to the emotional attachment usually associated with friendships and relationships as they are understood at the present time. It is very hard to

stand by and see someone who is your true friend in trouble and difficulty. It is important, however, not to encourage one's friends to maintain an outlook, theory or activity which the Order genuinely, as a result of taking counsel together, believes to be unwise. It is important, when a person is suspended or required to sit on the gaitan, to let him or her know that there will be no further contact from you until he or she has come to the realisation that just maybe they could be wrong. The trainee needs to know that he or she is not an outcast but, at the same time, he or she will not be encouraged in doing what they are doing. This is both hard to do and hard to bear on both sides; to admit to having made a mistake is equally hard to do. To accept that mistake, especially when it is a mistake of a master, is a sign of a true disciple; however, a true disciple will not encourage the mistake. Even if a person is ruined, whether that person is master or disciple, it is incredibly important not to despise that person for, if you despise anyone, the downhill road to pride, arrogance, despair and complacency takes but a fraction of time to descend.

The Secret Papers say, 'When bowing ceases Buddhism ceases.' What does it mean to bow? To bow to another is to bear what is hard to bear, not to forsake and not to despise. When bowing ceases there is no fellow feeling, there is a turning away, and there is a despising and then all true understanding of Buddhism is obscured.

If you would keep true to the source of the teachings of the Buddhas and Ancestors, you must understand these two paragraphs of *Gradual Sayings* thoroughly; you must learn to accept the humanity of both your fellow trainees and your teachers and masters and not copy their mistakes, nor encourage them in their mistakes, nor turn against them, nor despise them when they make them. This is the true source of Buddhism.

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# The Dragon's-eye View

O, you were the big, bold hero  
Who set the maiden free!  
No matter some said you didn't exist;  
With your fearsome lance and great, mailed fist  
You were real enough for me.

I intended no harm to the maiden.  
She sensed - never mind what you thought -  
That, if treated kindly and given a pat,  
I would curl at her feet and purr like a cat.  
To be friendly was all I sought.

Each swish of my tail was a-sparkle  
With stars in molten cascade,  
My scales burnished ebony, breath all a-flame,  
Yet the maiden perceived that I wasn't to blame  
For the way that dragons are made.

So weren't you rather a show-off?  
And wasn't your craving to win,  
All that brandishing swords, and the posturing stuff  
About vanquishing evil a bit of a bluff  
When the dragon was really within?

If only you could have admitted  
My presence, you would have revealed  
A bravery more than mere killing displayed,  
That the power, when gentled, might come to your aid  
And the wound of division be healed.

Olga Townend.

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[We are grateful to Miss Townend for permission to use her poem which first appeared in the magazine *Zen Traces* in 1988. It is an amusing and thoughtful sequel to the article *Dragons and Duality* which appeared in our last issue]

# KUKEN

## Or, when is a Void not a Void?

by Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy, M.O.B.C.

You may have seen newspaper or magazine reports recently of a well-known Buddhist leader who, it is said, had sexual relations with members of his organisation for several years while concealing the fact that he carried the AIDS virus, thus infecting some of them. It was reported that this person believed (erroneously, of course) that somehow he and those around him were protected against the consequences of what they were doing and that he could overcome the effects of the virus through 'changing his karma.'

If these reports are true (and I have no way of knowing whether they are or not), I'm sure it is as obvious to you as it is to me that such behaviour and thinking would be absurdly irresponsible and deluded. While you and I make mistakes in Buddhist training from time to time, surely we could never go that far astray. Or could we? Try the following line of thinking on for size:

The basic teaching of the *Lotus Sutra* is that all existences and all laws are Void and fundamentally non-existent. This includes the Law of Karma. Thus enlightened action, being inherently void and empty, produces no karmic consequence. We are also taught that all action done with the Buddha-seeking mind is enlightened action and that our very mind is the Buddha-seeking mind when we do not cloud it with deliberate or discriminative thought. Therefore, if we are to be wholehearted and truly courageous in our practice, caring only for the Truth regardless of social conventions and the opinions of others, we must act, without hesitation or deliberation, upon whatever



natural thoughts come into our minds. Only in this way will we truly know the freedom of Zen. And such actions, if truly done without discrimination or judgement, will have no karmic consequences since they are one with the Void. Suppose now that the next thought that comes to mind is the desire to have sex with one's neighbour. One mustn't think about it, or weigh it against the Precepts, for that would be to engage in deliberate thought; one must do it! And if one of us happens to have AIDS, well, that will take care of itself since, because we are one with the Truth, we are not affected by the karma of actions that come from our non-deliberate, natural thought.

Having read the paragraph above, with any luck you are beginning to squirm somewhat and to feel not quite so safe from getting caught by something that could end you up in next Sunday's newspaper. At least I no longer feel so safe, having written those thoughts, nor so righteous in my condemnations of a certain person's alleged misdeeds. You see, every part of the above paragraph, up to the words, "Therefore if we are to be whole hearted..." is true and is composed of actual quotes or paraphrases of the actual teachings of famous Buddhist saints and sages. The catch is that they didn't mean those words in that way. What I have tried to do in the paragraph above is to show just how easy it is to fall into the trap known as *kuken*.

Kuken ( 空見 ,Sunyata drsti)' is a particularly slippery and highly dangerous heresy which combines two related mistaken views: that all is 'void' in the negative sense of the word and that the law of karma is inoperative for one who holds this view. So, when you read a translation of some famous Buddhist text where it is said that existence, form, or whatever is 'void', 'empty', 'nothingness', 'vacuity', or 'non-existence,' beware: the words are not being used with their normal dictionary definitions. They are being used to translate one or the other of two closely

related and extremely subtle Buddhist terms: 空 (ku, or sunyata) and 如 (nyo, or tathata).

These terms both refer to Something which cannot be described in words, Something which is Void alright: the fullest Void you'd ever want to meet! This Something (I'll call it Ku from here on) is indeed the fundamental principle of Mahayana Buddhism, but It is not in the least bit negative or nihilistic. It is more like the pure Buddha Essence of the entire universe. Because of the danger of the negative misunderstanding of Ku, our Order has adopted the practice of translating Ku as 'purity' or 'the Pure'. While using the concept of 'purity' to describe Ku is a practice that can be traced back to Bodhidharma<sup>2</sup> and the Sixth Patriarch,<sup>3</sup> it is not wholly without its perils, either. For, while words like 'void' imply inaccurately that Ku is a negative vacuum, words like 'pure' imply inaccurately that Ku is a specific, positive, graspable thing. As the Sixth Patriarch said, "if we direct our mind to dwell upon purity we are only creating another delusion, the delusion of purity."<sup>4</sup> At least the delusion of purity doesn't do nearly so much damage as kuken. There are other words sometimes used to translate Ku, words like 'suchness', 'thusness', and 'Absolute Reality'. These have the drawback of sounding very wise yet having so little definite meaning that almost any misunderstanding could be covered up by them and you'd never even know it.

The second of the two delusions that make up kuken is the notion that somehow the law of cause and effect, karma, does not apply to those who believe in kuken. This half of kuken seems to grow inevitably from the other half: once someone misunderstands Ku as being negatively void, it is apparently only a matter of time until he feels himself to be 'free' from the 'restraints' of Karma. One can see how one might come to this conclusion, given the true teaching that "enlightened action leaves no wake,"<sup>5</sup> but the fact that people frequently do come to this conclusion probably has more to do with the nature of the selfish



'self' than it does with mistaken understandings of the teaching. You see, kuken is so very convenient for the 'self': it requires the believer to indulge every selfish notion which comes to mind, while justifying such indulgence as 'enlightenment' and reassuring the believer that he or she is 'free' from any karmic consequence. And, for a while, it can appear that there is no karmic consequence, for it seems to be characteristic of people in this kind of delusion that the full karmic consequence of their actions is considerably delayed because some of the heaviest karmas tend not to ripen immediately, thus giving the appearance of 'getting away with it' for some time. Anything this attractive to the 'self' is hard for most of us to pass up if we are given the chance to latch onto it. The true state of affairs is much less appetizing to the 'self': if anyone does an enlightened act there is indeed no karmic consequence, but if his next act is not an enlightened one then there is a karmic consequence, and if he truly understands Ku, that consequence tends to be both immediate and very painful.

Once a person does latch on to kuken, the results can be devastating. Any indulgence can be justified by it; all restraints of common sense, reason, conscience, empathy, and ethics are reduced by kuken to the status of 'hang-ups' which are to be 'transcended.' The same applies to the restraints of the Buddhist Precepts and Vinaya (rules for the priesthood.) Since junior students of Buddhism generally do not have the inner certainty to dare to disobey any of the rules whereas senior disciples know that occasionally the letter of the rules must be broken in order to keep their spirit, kuken is usually a spiritual disease of more senior members of Buddhist groups. Within the 'freedom' of kuken anything goes. I am not saying that the individual who was reported as having transmitted AIDS to some of his congregation suffered from kuken; I have no way of knowing, but his alleged actions and thinking are exactly the sort of thing one would expect from someone suffering from this problem. The same is true for the reports one reads of uninhibited substance abuse, sexual misconduct, and other

gross irresponsibilities within the higher circles of a fairly large number of Western organisations at the present time.

Kuken may also help to explain the current trend towards what I call 'master-bashing' among second generation Western students of Buddhism. This is the tendency of some of the senior students of virtually all teachers who brought Buddhism to the West (whether those teachers be Oriental or Western) to turn against and split away from their masters. The inevitable reason given by such students is that their master committed some grievous wrong: if substance abuse or sexual or financial misconduct is not alleged, then there will be accusations of some abuse of the disciples or some 'heresy.' I do not doubt that the occasional Buddhist teacher proves to be unworthy (possibly as a result of kuken), but all of them?!? No; something else must be going on, and I suspect that what is going on, at least in part, is kuken. First of all, it is a pitfall of deeper Buddhism, one more likely to affect senior disciples. Second, the widespread appearance of 'master-bashing' at present suggests some more general cause than the specific charges listed in each case. Third, as we have discussed above, there is evidence that kuken may be a problem that is in general circulation among the senior members of many organisations at the present time. Fourth, the disgruntled students tend not to seek another master but rather to set themselves up without a master or take a dead teacher as their 'master.' This is suggestive of the operation of kuken because a live, qualified teacher is one of the primary safeguards against kuken, and such a teacher is apt to make life very difficult for the student who has succumbed to kuken. From the mind of kuken, a dead teacher is ever so much more convenient than a live one, since somewhere or other in his or her writings words can be found that can be interpreted as supporting the disciple's position, and the teacher can't answer back to say that that wasn't how he or she meant it.

Kuken may even have found its way into pop culture, particularly in association with Zen Buddhism (which does rely heavily on Ku as a central doctrine), for we find people referring to others using the adjective 'Zenned-out.' This seems to mean that the person is capable of doing whatever they wish without the inhibitions of conscience and with neither hesitation nor regret. The term is used with particular enthusiasm among some criminals, where it appears to refer to nothing more glorious than a severe case of mental disorder known as psychopathy, the primary feature of which is the total absence of conscience and empathy.

Since the distinction between Ku and kuken is so subtle and yet so critical, Buddhist teachers from the earliest times have tried to clarify the meaning of Ku and the dangers of kuken. These explanations and warnings can be found in both the Theravada and Mahayana branches of Buddhism and among many of the greatest writers of the Serene Reflection School. Some of the best are to found in *The Sutra of Hui Neng*.<sup>6</sup> The famous Zen story of Hyakujo's Fox tells of the miserable fate of a master caught in kuken who taught his disciples that the enlightened man was not subject to the law of karma and suffered for five hundred lives as a fox until he met Master Hyakujo who explained his error and set him free.<sup>7</sup> Great Master Dogen wrote: *None of us have more than one body during this lifetime, therefore it is indeed tragic to lead a life of evil as a result of heresy for it is impossible to escape from karmic consequence if we do evil on the assumption that, by not recognising an act as evil, no bad karma can accrue to us.*<sup>8</sup>

So what is the poor student of Buddhism to do if he or she wants to penetrate to the deeper levels of our religion and come to a direct experience of Ku without falling into kuken? I think there are several things that can help, the first of which is to recognise that this is a risky, high-stakes business. If you realize that kuken exists and that you can fall into it very easily as you become more senior, you are



much less likely to do so. You are also, by the way, much more likely to have understanding and compassion for those who have become enmeshed in it. I suspect that the majority of Buddhist leaders who end up with their names in the newspaper for outrageous behaviour should not be dismissed as fools, fraudes, or rakes, but are probably well-meaning and serious people who have gotten caught in kuken or something similar, a fate that could just as easily befall you or me tomorrow. Indeed, I have noticed that it is just those people who are most intolerant of other's downfalls who are themselves at greatest risk of falling victim to kuken.

Secondly, we can study Ku using the best possible translations of the best scriptures available and under the supervision of highly qualified teachers. With regard to the former, remember to be aware of the words that translators have used for Ku: *The Void isn't void!* With regard to the latter, I think that the important thing is to stay with a qualified teacher once you have found him or her. Yes, teachers can sometimes be difficult to live with (who isn't?); yes, they are human and make mistakes and may even inadvertently hurt you upon occasion (nobody says you have to copy their mistakes!); yes, you may know more about some things than they do (so what?); without one ---without a real, live one who is willing to give you a spiritual kick in the pants when necessary---you are a sitting duck for kuken.

Third, remember that the freedom of Buddhism is freedom within the Precepts (and for priests and monks within the Vinaya as well), for Ku is That from Which the Precepts come. The true freedom of Buddhism comes from being totally at one with the Precepts, from having the Precepts 'flow through one's veins as does one's very life-blood.'<sup>9</sup> As Master Hyakujo replied when the fox finally got the chance to ask him whether or not the enlightened man was subject to the Law of karma, 'The enlightened man is one with the law of causation'. [Emphasis mine].<sup>10</sup>

Finally, take refuge deeply in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. All of the Three Treasures arise from, and partake of, Ku. If your actions are one with Ku they should be in harmony with Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. If they are not so in harmony, be very careful. If it appears to you that one of the Three Treasures is out of harmony with the other two, be very careful. If your state of mind places you in opposition to both the Precepts or Vinaya and your master, be very, very careful.

The ongoing search for Ku is a great and heroic quest: each time you succeed you penetrate deeper into the Heart of the Universe; fail once, act from the mind of kuken, and well.....five hundred lives as a fox?

#### Notes.

N.B. Reprinted with permission from the *Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, Volume 4, No. 3.

1. *Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary* (Tokyo: Daito Shuppansha, 1979), s.v. 'Kuken.'
2. J. C. Cleary, trans., *Zen Dawn: Early Texts from Tun Huang* (Boston: Shambala, 1986), pp. 36 and 82.
3. A. F. Price and Wong Mou-Lam, trans., *The Diamond Sutra & The Sutra of Hui Neng* (Berkeley CA: Shambala, 1969), Bk. 2, p. 47.
4. Ibid.
5. Rev. Roshi P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., 'Enlightened Action Leaves No Wake,' *The Journal of Shasta Abbey*, Vol. 12, Nos. 1 & 2, (Jan-Feb 1981), p. 2.
6. See Price and Mou-Lam.
7. Paul Reps, ed., *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co. Inc.), pp. 90-92.
8. Great Master Dogen, 'Shushogi' [What Is Truly Meant by Training & Enlightenment], in *Zen is Eternal Life* 3rd. ed. rev. by Roshi P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, (Mount Shasta, CA: Shasta Abbey Press, 1987), p. 156.
9. Jiyu-Kennett, *Zen Is Eternal Life*, p. 64.
10. Reps, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, p. 91.

## A Serious Error in Training

There are those in Britain who condone sexual relations between teachers and their students. This behaviour causes great harm, particularly when it is passed off as spiritual teaching.

When the traditional structure of the monastic Sangha with its inherent safeguards is rejected, the likelihood of this happening is much greater. These safeguards include taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha; rigorous long-term training and practice in the Precepts, and a deep understanding of the law of karma. The Master-disciple relationship, which is part of the traditional system, is a relationship that continues *after* an individual becomes a teacher. Even if the teacher's Master is dead, they should still be taking refuge in their seniors and contemporaries in the Dharma about all aspects of their training. This continuing relationship is a vital aspect of what it means to take Refuge in the Sangha. When refuge is taken in this way, the safety of both master and disciple is preserved.

When teachers indulge in sexuality with those who look to them for help, they are exploiting the vulnerability of their students. This is true even if the student is willing, or makes the proposal. A common pattern, however, is that the teacher manipulates the student into having sex. This can take place in either a heterosexual or homosexual context. It is worth describing one way in which this exploitation comes about so that it can be better understood and avoided.

Many people come to realise that they are cut off from others and have difficulty in being able to love. There is much pain associated with this and a sincere trainee naturally wishes to overcome these difficulties. Some people who give themselves the designation of 'spiritual friends', or ill-trained teachers, teach that such inhibitions are overcome by indulging in sexuality. The unfortunate student finds himself, or



herself under pressure to demonstrate their willingness to open up by expressing their openness through engaging in sexual activity with the so-called friend. What the 'friend' has done is to exploit the trust and vulnerability of the student and lead them into much deeper confusion than they were in before. The outcome of such an encounter is to take away from the student the understanding that the source of love and compassion lies within themselves. This can be devastating. We all have a natural inhibition against mis-using sexuality and a need to preserve the boundaries of our own being. When such boundaries are violated, the individual suffers a rape of the spirit as well as the body. He or she is confused into thinking that such natural restraints are wrong, and destructive impulses are right. The Buddha taught the middle way between the extremes of repression and indulgence because one **cannot** deal with repression through indulgence.

This kind of exploitation also causes serious harm to the person's faith and trust. These wounds can be healed through meditation and genuinely compassionate help and understanding, but the individual's pain is often so great that they cannot bring themselves to seek help for that requires the very trust that has been so badly damaged.

The so-called teachers who are caught up in this error--often, it seems, in a homosexual context--have sometimes been the victims of this kind of exploitation themselves. Such karma goes on endlessly until ignorance is overcome by recognising serious errors for what they are; but we must be careful not to compound the error by abandoning compassion for judgementalism.

*Rev. Daishin Morgan, M.O.B.C.*

\* \* \*

## News from Shasta Abbey



### GIFT OF STATUES IN MEMORY OF OUR FOUNDER

#### SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA

On October 16 1989 we received a shipment of three statues that had been enshrined in Fukuju-in, one of our Founder's (Great Master Keido Chisan's) family of temples in Japan. Rev. Koryu Moguchi, the present priest of Fukuju-in, writes:

*Dear Roshi Jiyu,*

*August 30 1989*

*...This year is the twenty-second anniversary of the passing of Koho Zenji, and there are plans to hold memorial services at Soji-ji, Daiyuzan, Raigaku-ji in*



GREAT MASTER BODHIDHARMA

Suwa, Eiko-ji, and other temples. At my temple also, we plan to hold services in October in conjunction with Soji-ji.

In connection with this occasion (it is as if our late master's happiness is coming through from the other world with regard to your activity) we have sent you three statues---carved from camphor wood---that were enshrined in this temple: the Buddha, Great Master Bodhidharma, and Daigen Shuri Bodhisattva... Please install them in your sanctuary...

It was a great honour to receive these statues from our Dharma relatives in Japan. Bodhidharma and Daigen Shuri have been enshrined behind the main altar: Bodhidharma to the left and Daigen Shuri to the right. The photo above and the one on the next page were taken at their installation ceremonies here on Founder's Day, November 1st. The statue of Shakyamuni Buddha has been placed in our Founder's Shrine, to be moved at a future date to our Arhat Hall when it has been built. (Please see the letter from Rev. Seck Lee Ching on page 23.)

The statue of Bodhidharma represents meditation and training and the statue of Daigen Shuri represents scholarship, which is explained in the following: Daigen Shuri lived at the same time as Bodhidharma but, unlike Bodhidharma who became a monk, Daigen Shuri



began as a scholar. However, he eventually found that scholarship was not enough, it did not satisfy him, so he began looking for something else, for someone to show him a better way. If you look at the statue, you will see that it has been carved with his hand over his brow to convey this sense of searching. Eventually, Daigen Shuri found Bodhidharma and abandoned his scholarship for true training.



DAIGEN SHURI BODHISATTVA

We invite congregation members to make a point of seeing these statues on their next visit to the Abbey, and would like our Dharma relatives in Japan to know how deeply we appreciate having these statues.

\* \* \*

LETTER FROM REV. SECK LEE CHING,  
ABBOT OF CHENG HOON TENG TEMPLE

*[Rev, Master Jiyu received the following letter and proposed that, unless there is a dire emergency, we put their kind donation into a fund for the construction of our main gate (with Arhat hall above) and dedicate the gate to Rev, Seck Kim Seng, Rev, Seck Lee Ching's and her ordination master, -ed, Journal of the O,B,C,]*

青雲亭

號五十二牌門街華音觀甲六馬亞西東馬

Cheng Hoon Teng Temple

No. 25, Jalan To'Kong

(Temple Street,)

MALACCA,

WEST MALAYSIA.

Tel: No. 222906 六〇九二二二: 話電

REGISTERED

Date, December 12, 1989

Dear Jiyu

Today, the 15th of 11th lunar month, is our Master, Reverend Kim Seng's 10th anniversary. Every year on the eve of anniversary, we the disciples and followers of our Master will gather and chant.

Our Master, Reverend Kim Seng is indeed a good Master. He is a man of principle and is a good leader. We missed Him. He is just like our father who is strict at times but compassionate and wise.

I enclose herewith an O.U.B. Draft no. MDD89/1612 for USD2,200.00. This is a gift for you and your disciples. Although it is a small amount but it is a token of our care and love to you all over there. As we are all brothers and sisters of our Master, We should stand together and carry out our Master's will and work.

I enclose herewith two photos. One is our Master the other is our Grand Master(our Master's Master). Our Grand Master's name is Rev. Siang Lin (香林和尚). Please show them to your disciples and hope you will treasure them.

Do you have an account in the Bank? Is it all right for me to cross the draft "Not negotiable A/C Payee only" ? Can I write to you in Chinese ?

Please take good care of yourself which we (especially our late Master) always worried and concerned about. I still can remember that our Late Master was worried about your health. Only that you are healthy, you can preach and spread the teaching of our Lord Buddha.

Keep us in touch. May Lord Buddha be with us, all beings of the universe!

釋理證  
.....  
(Seck Lee Ching)



Rev. Seck Siang Lin



Rev. Seck Kim Seng



# At Ease!

Rev. Mugo White, F.O.B.C.

After another long day in the garden, struggling with the pain and practicalities of life with a newly-broken arm, an elderly woman sinks, sans teeth, into her warm soft bed, face in repose, the picture of ease and contentment. She pats my hand and thanks me as a child says her prayers: 'Thank you for this day...for being here...for the lovely food....' This sight remains with me and with it comes ease and great tenderness of heart for a woman, my mother, whom I had not known, in the deepest sense, since childhood.

Ease and a sense of contentment are not strangers to us. We have all come across people in whose company all seems peaceful, or have come to rest our eyes on a view, or heard a fleeting chord which has touched us deeply. Too often we touch on ease in this way only to become afraid of, or grasp after, that which has helped us to open our hearts and momentarily forget ourselves. However, by attempting to fix in a tangible form (in a person, music, nature etc.) that which flows through form, yet is not bound by it, we inadvertently close our hearts to our heart's desire. It is a state of little ease, and even less contentment.

In the Middle Ages, there was a particularly gruesome form of torture. Offenders were locked in a small cell where they could neither stand, nor sit, nor lie down; they had to remain half-crouching. The room was called 'the place of little ease.' When we do not just sit, just stand, just lie down, when we are not still and singleminded in our daily endeavours we are, in effect, spiritually crouching. Thus, through half-hearted effort we keep ourselves locked in the place of little ease. However, what puts us in two minds and causes us to stray from the stillness, be it greed, anger or delusion, has no reality in Truth; therefore, the flowing nature of the Eternal cannot stop or be

stopped. The Eternal flows through light and darkness and also through the grey area where little ease is found, the three fires only rising up when they are fed by our indulging attachments. In the process of training our attachments and detachments flow together as the steps in walking; physical activity and rest also permeate each other constantly, no longer standing apart as opposites. The key to *recognising* this flowing together of apparent opposites is to train wholeheartedly: a generous heart is always full.

The life of the Sangha relies upon our learning to relax and be at ease within ourselves. This is expressed in our open willingness to let go of self as it manifests, for example, in self-protective behaviour. The opportunities are many. The self is wily; greed, anger, and delusion a seemingly inexhaustible fire. However, fire is not fought with fire. We 'fight' fire with water, with compassion, finding in so doing that there is only one kind of fire---the burning to return to That Which Is. By accepting and having compassion for this burning within, this huge capacity to love unconditionally, our hearts remain open and ever filled. In films, the fulfilment of romantic love is accompanied by soaring emotions and a fanfare of music. In religious training, there are no fanfares, just a sense of ease. At a recent *Dharma Ceremony* a monk asked, 'I don't know this yearning. Am I missing something?' 'No, you know fullness of heart,' came the reply. A full heart is simply full; it lacks nothing, wants nothing, and knows not its own fullness.

Training is a process without end, there being for all of us 'warmer' and 'cooler' moments. The cooler times seem desolate and dark and we can easily fall prey to doubt, one of the Five Hindrances.' Traditionally, doubt is explained as doubt that the Buddha was enlightened, that the Dharma is the Truth, and that the Sangha has transmitted the Dharma correctly. Since we are not separate from the Three Treasures, it is in fact doubt in our own spiritual abilities to train in the Way. This sceptical doubt, interestingly, arises in those who feel they are not loved or cannot fully

express love. To commit oneself to a spiritual path, one has to give oneself completely. If we feel we cannot fully love, we cannot then give ourselves fully to training. An intellectual understanding of the Way is helpful, yet it is not enough. One needs to give of oneself completely and constantly. The Buddha teaches us how to deal with each of the hindrances. For sceptical doubt He advises learning more about the Dharma (a clearer understanding can aid deeper insight), and associating with wise and mature people (opening oneself to the life of the Sangha). We all know periods when our ability to train is thrown into doubt and we are consumed by darkness and desolation. This too is the Way; to which we give ourselves wholeheartedly.

After another long day in the garden, an elderly woman sinks, sans teeth, into her warm soft bed, the picture of ease and contentment. She pats my hand and says, as a child says her prayers, 'Plants give so much, people don't know what they're missing.' I'd not recognised this full joy within my mother's long hard days tending her huge plant collection---I'd only seen a life of unremitting toil. All beings knowingly or unknowingly join in the religious life, there being no universal blueprint for training save the guidance of the Precepts. All are One within the Great Life and all are also different. Each succeed in their own way uniquely. Knowing and following our path of training, all are at ease.

'Lo, Hear, set up not your own standards...'

\* \* \*

#### Notes

11. The Five Hindrances are lust, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubts.

\* \* \*



## Serene Reflection Meditation

Silently and serenely, forgetting all words,  
Clearly and vividly, *It* appears before you.  
When realised, *It* is vast and without edges;  
When experienced, your surroundings come to life.  
All illuminating is this bright awareness,  
Full of wonder is this pure reflection.  
Dew and the moon,  
Stars and streams,  
Snow-clad pine trees,  
And mist hovering on mountain peaks:  
From darkness, they become glowingly bright;  
From obscurity, they shine with an eternal light.  
Like the dreaming of a crane in a cloudless sky,  
Like the clear, still waters of an autumn pool,  
Endless aeons dissolve into the immaculacy of  
nothingness,  
Each indistinguishable from the other.  
In this reflection all striving is left behind;  
Infinite wonder permeates this serenity.  
On the path of Serene Reflection,  
The source of the infinitesimal,  
Brightness and clarity dispel confusion.  
To penetrate the extreme minute,  
There is the gold shuttle on a loom of jade.  
Subject and object influence one the other;  
Light and darkness do accord like steps in  
walking.  
There is neither mind nor world to rely on,  
Yet do they mutually interpenetrate.  
Drink the medicine of right views,  
Beat the poison-smeared drum.  
When stillness and reflection are complete,  
Killing and bringing to life are choices I make.  
At last, through the door, one emerges;  
The fruit has ripened on the branch.  
Serenity is the final word of all teachings;  
Reflection is the response to all appearances.  
Free of effort,  
This response is natural and spontaneous,  
The teaching not heard with the ears.

Throughout the universe all things  
Radiate light and speak the Dharma.  
They testify to each other,  
Answering each other's questions.  
*One calls and one replies,*  
Responding in perfect unison.  
If in reflection there is no serenity,  
Disharmony will arise;  
If in serenity there is no reflection,  
All becomes wasteful and dull.

Like a goose preferring milk to water,  
Like a patient bee gathering pollen,  
When Serene Reflection reaches the Source,  
I carry on the original tradition of Buddha.

The truth of Serene Reflection  
Is perfect and complete,  
It penetrates from the deepest to the highest.  
The thousand mountains face the loftiest peak;  
The lotus will blossom, the dreamer will awaken:

Oh look! The hundred rivers flow  
In tumbling torrents  
To the great ocean!

\* \* \*

[For the above thorough recension of the poem *Notes on Serene Reflection (or Silent Illumination)* by Hung Chih Cheng-Chueh [J. Wanshi Shokaku], 1091-1157, I have drawn heavily on, and freely adapted, two excellent translations. One is by Garma C.C. Chang from *The Practice of Zen* (NY: Harper & Row, 1959); the other by Master Sheng-Yen from *Getting the Buddha Mind* (NY: Dharma Drum Publications, 1982). We are grateful for permission to include these in our Journal. Much of the vocabulary has been changed to include the familiar words and phrases commonly used in our tradition.-ed.]

\* \* \*

# MEDITATION GROUPS WEEKEND 1989

Forty-two people from eighteen meditation groups took part in last year's Groups Weekend. This annual event is held to provide an opportunity for group members to gain some mutual support from each other, to share insights, and discuss some of the difficulties involved in running a group. Morning and evening meditation and services took place as usual, but the rest of the time was devoted to the scheduled events or informal contacts between participants.

The first session was a talk by Rev. Master Daishin. The main topics to be discussed at the weekend were raised, followed by a detailed look at how to best publicise retreats, public talks, how to design an effective poster etc. For the next session, people had to choose one out of three classes on offer:

1. How to present, act as chaplain, and offer incense.
2. How to set up an altar, and other sacristy advice for groups.
3. Sharing one's training: writing and public talks.

Later in the afternoon, participants divided into two groups for a class on singing the scriptures.

The next day everyone split up into small discussion groups to talk over topics of common interest. Later, a spokesperson from each group gave a brief summary of any conclusions reached. Some of the major points coming out of this were as follows: Fund raising for the Priory and for groups; ideas for publicity; the future of the Groups Weekend; why are women a minority at the Priory (see p. 39); and problems of nomenclature (e.g. 'Zen'). There was a great demand for more opportunities for discussion.

*Virginia Lee* writes:

'What will it be like this year?' I asked myself on the long journey northwards. The amount of talk at



the 1988 Groups Weekend had been so surprising compared to our other visits to the Priory. Yet I know the place is never the same as it was the time before. To attend the second Groups weekend, six of us from the Whitchurch group were travelling a total of over 3,600 miles. One of us was making his first visit. Would it be worth the effort? What would we remember about the 1989 weekend?

Well, there were the little luxuries, such as being able to flush the toilets (instead of using buckets of water), appreciated by those who had been to the Priory during the summer's drought. There was the chance to exchange news and ideas, to find out more about people whom one had previously got to know by sitting next to them in silence. This year, formal meals made welcome pools of quiet in the day. The programme was wider; as well as all-group talks and discussions, people had the option to choose two out of three classes.

One of my choices was called 'Sharing One's Training.' This was, in part, intended for those who might be called upon to explain basic Buddhism to others.... The class turned out to be mainly concerned with how to write a journal article. Of particular interest was Rev. Chushin's guidance on the sort of writing he looks for in articles submitted by lay people. We all agreed that the most successful articles are those which arise from a personal experience which can be shared, simply and directly, with others. He felt the tone of the article should be basically optimistic, suggesting to the reader a way out of the problem. However, several of us thought it is often helpful to read about others' unresolved problems, making us feel less isolated as we try to deal with our own. This led to a discussion about the degree of editorial guidance used to bring articles in line with the Journal's characteristic flavour or 'house style.'

My second option was a class on acting as a chaplain to the celebrant. At morning service at the Priory, I admire the effortless, dance-like movements

of the celebrant and the two chaplains during the incense offering. Having tried it myself, I now know how much work must be needed to achieve such grace and control. Learning the steps reminded me of Pony Club days and the intricacies of dressage tests. Just like the pony, the incense box had an unpredictable life and will of its own, lunging around on its slippery glass-topped base. Cautiously, I tried rising up on my toes, circling the box on high, carrying it steadily with outstretched arms, keeping in time with my partner, going on one knee, settling it safely on the stand....It was wonderful! I could have gone on all afternoon, if that had not meant missing my chance to hit the big gong, and of trying to co-ordinate my off-beat ringing of the inkin with Rev. Myfanwy's patient prostrations.

What happened the rest of the time? As always, a complex net of simple experiences, good food, shared teaching, new ideas, hard work; above all, feeling the strength of the Sangha, sitting together, singing Vespers in the darkness. Slogging home down the M5, trying to focus against the glare of opposing headlights, trying to be still in greasy service stations, trying not to tangle with Monday morning---yes, of course it felt worth the effort. Perhaps I'd even learned a bit more about letting go and balancing, whatever form that incense box might take....

\* \* \*

The next Meditation Groups Weekend has already been scheduled: **November 23-25 1990**. It would be helpful if each group kept a list of issues it would like discussed; please don't wait until the last minute to send us your ideas, as the discussions will be more fruitful if all the participants have had a chance to reflect on the questions beforehand. The agenda will be published some weeks before the meeting itself.

\* \* \*

# Dependent Origination

Rev. Koshin Schomberg, M.O.B.C.

[The following article was first published in the *Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, Volume 4, Number 2]

## 4. Becoming.

The next step in this continuing examination of the teaching of Dependent Origination (the detailed study of the functioning of the law of karma in past, present and possible future lives) is expressed as follows:

*Becoming depends upon clinging.*

The Sanskrit word *bhavah* is usually translated as *becoming*, though in the recently published, authoritative *Chinese-Sanskrit-Thai Buddhist Dictionary* it is rendered as *being*.

Words such as *becoming* and *being* seem to convey a formidable philosophical meaning. However, the meaning is really quite simple though its implications for spiritual training are vast. The word *bhavah* refers to the continuation of a stream of karma from one life into a future life. And so this step in the teaching is saying that because of a deep-seated attachment (clinging) there is the continuation of the stream of karma dominated by that attachment at the time of death into a new life form.

The above explanation is lacking in one essential point: it does not emphasize the necessity of the continuation of the stream of karma due to clinging. Clinging [S: *upadanam*] is deeply entrenched greed, one which is always rationalised by deluded views. Through the influence of clinging, the spiritual need which is seeking resolution is only intensified and made more



desperate. Turned outward towards passing experience, which cannot possibly offer a true and enduring refuge, the karmic stream is impelled at the time of death to blindly grope for a new form within which to continue its search for peace.

This step in the teaching of Dependent Origination thus presents us with the sobering fact that while any clinging remains, the continuation of the stream of pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, is an inescapable necessity. But note that this necessity only holds while clinging continues. With the cessation of clinging, becoming also must cease. And, unlike becoming, which is entirely consequential' (that is, the effect of clinging), clinging involves volition. In other words, while we persist in clinging, we have no choice whether the stream of our karma will flow on or not: it has to. But we *do* have a choice at all times whether to persist in clinging. And as soon as we let go of all clinging ('Om to the One Who leaps beyond all fear!'<sup>2</sup>), becoming ceases.

The understanding of the volitional nature of clinging, and the purely consequential nature of becoming, underlies the attitude of the Buddhist priest toward the dying and recently dead. For regardless of what anyone may have done in the past, no one can preclude the possibility of a deep change of heart at any time. And such a change can completely alter the course of a person's karmic stream in the twinkling of an eye. The ceremonies and exhortations that accompany the dying and death of a Buddhist are intended to strengthen faith so that suffering and confusion need not continue into future lives.

I have emphasized here that we can choose not to persist in clinging; there is a stubborn holding on (as the very word 'clinging' implies) present in clinging, which represents a misdirection of the will. As the will is realigned towards its true Object, the Eternal, that stubborn persistence in greed and delusion is converted into willingness, acceptance, patience, firm and steady effort, and compassionate

recognition that there is nowhere for a self to be protected and aggrandized.

*Becoming* refers to the continuation of the stream of karma into future lives. Within all such lives, suffering is present. Some people who have studied Buddhism intellectually but have little or no real experience of Buddhist training have come to the conclusion that the cessation of becoming---the end of the stream of karma---represents a nihilistic religious ideal. The Buddha explicitly denied both the teachings of nihilism and eternalism (the eternal existence of a separate self). The end of the confusion of suffering is not the end of the True Self---the Eternal. Beings persist in clinging and thereby continue the rolling of the wheel of sorrow from life to life because they mistake the changing appearance of existence for their true life. When one knows within one's blood and bones, regardless of what may happen to one's changing body and mind, that one's true life is in the Eternal, one has at last begun the transcendence of the opposites of nihilism and eternalism. Rev. Master Jiyu calls this True Life 'the immaculacy of nothingness' and the longer I train, the more I appreciate the magnificence of this description of That which cannot be described.

So the cessation of becoming is, as we will see as we continue this series, identical to Parinirvana---final cessation of all suffering at the time of death of someone who has entirely cleansed the karmic stream. While Nirvana is usually described by what it is not in the Pali Scriptures, one can find it described in the Mahayana Scriptures in terms of positive qualities. Thus, while the three qualities of changing experience [*trilaksana*] are *dukkha* [suffering], *anicca* [transience] and *anatman* [absence of an enduring refugel], those of Nirvana, as described in the *Mahaparinirvana Sutra*, are bliss, eternality, True Self and purity.<sup>3</sup> For those who wonder who experiences these qualities, the answer is that within the Eternal there is no 'you' and 'me' and the qualities of Nirvana are not passing states but unchanging aspects of

That which changes not. All ecstatic states, even those most linked to worldly life, involve in some way the experience of losing oneself within something greater, a merging into a greater oneness. In speaking of Nirvana and the Eternal, we point towards that transcendence of self adumbrated in those lesser ecstatic states and which is so complete that even desire for ecstasy itself is transcended.

At this point we arrive at the need to discuss the realms of rebirth and this will be the subject of the next article in this series.

\* \* \*

#### Notes.

1. For the purpose of the present discussion, I am simplifying the examination of becoming. This discussion involves only rebirth-becoming which is purely consequential. In a future article, we will examine karma-becoming, which is volitional activity.
2. Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C., *The Liturgy of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives for the Laity* (Mt. Shasta, California: Shasta Abbey Press, 1987), p.85.
3. See Kosho Yamamoto, trans., *The Mahayana Mahaparinirvana-Sutra*, 3 vols (Ube, Japan: Karinbunko, 1973-1975), Volume 1, pp. xxx, 53-55 and 177-179; and Volume 2, pp. 562-569. See also Narada Maha Thera, *The Buddha and His Teachings*, 3rd. ed. (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: The Buddhist Missionary Society, 1977), pp.499-511.

\* \* \*



# FAMILY WEEKEND 1990

The Family Weekend, August 3-5, will be our third annual family event. This is an opportunity for parents in the congregation to share a weekend at the Priory, enabling the children to become more familiar with the monastic community and to join in some of its activities. We have ideas and suggestions and would appreciate further feedback including some from the children involved.

It has been suggested the children join the monks in some ordinary daily work, as well as preparing for the *Ksitigarbha Ceremony*. They might like to put on a play for us all based upon a Buddhist theme. Perhaps we can play games that all can join in, a 'wide' game (like a Treasure Hunt) with a Buddhist theme.

Whilst the children are busy with their own activities, the adults will have time to get together. If you have ideas on how you would like this time to be used, please get in touch.

**Accommodation:** A variety of options are open. The Field Study Centre in either Catton or Allenheads will be available. The YHA (Alston) will take groups, only the leader needing to be a YHA member. Children are welcome with special arrangements for children under five. The local B & B's can take families, & there is always the option of camping on the Priory grounds.

**Co-ordinator:** Karen Richards has kindly offered to co-ordinate the weekend. Please get in touch with her if you are interested in coming. Phone: 0952.82570.

Dave Hurcombe will be co-ordinating the accommodation. Phone: 091.265.1404.

\* \* \*

## News

**Monastic News:** On January 1 [the same day as the *Festival of Maitreya Bodhisattva*, The Buddha To Come], Rev. Master Daishin ordained Max Schreurs giving him the name *Houn Baldwin* [Noble Friend in the Dharma Cloud]. The Head Novice's Dharma Ceremony took place on January 24 with Rev. Alfrid O'hBartain successfully answering the questions put to him by his fellow monks. Also in January, Rev Master Jiyu named Rev. Chushin Passmore a Master of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives. We congratulate Rev. Chushin, Rev. Baldwin and Rev. Alfrid and wish them well in their monastic training.

We are pleased to welcome Rev. Phoebe Van Woerden, a senior monk from Shasta Abbey, to the community. Rev. Phoebe arrived on January 26 after a nightmarish journey braving the recent gales. Rev. Edmund had a smoother passage, returning from his three month visit to the Abbey early in February.

**Reading Buddhist Priory:** Rev. Saido & Rev. Aylwin left Throssel Hole Priory on January 6 to set up and run the new Priory in Reading. By all accounts, things are going very well, with plenty of work and teaching to keep them busy. For more information, please ring Rev. Saido at 0734.508817.

**Festivals & Ceremonies:** The Festival Memorial for Rev. Seck Kim Seng, Rev. Master Jiyu's ordination master, was on January 5. His life as a monk (sincerely following the Precepts, and teaching by example rather than using 'fancy words') remains an inspiration to us all. The Festival of the Buddha's Renunciation & The Festival of the Buddha's Parinirvana were celebrated in February; also in February, the festival ceremonies of the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteswara & Samantabhadra took place.

**Memorials:** Memorial ceremonies have been held for Tony

Hood, George Dunkley, Charlotte Fisher, and for an unborn child.

**Talks & Retreats:** Public talks have recently been given in Aberdeen, Huddersfield, Liverpool and Newcastle; meditation retreats led by priests from the Priory have been held in Aberdeen, Manchester, Bradford, Edinburgh, and in Holland. Monks have also visited the Lancaster & Newcastle Meditation Groups to lead the evening meeting.

**Northern Meditation Groups' Day:** To be held at Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire, on **Saturday May 19, 11am to 5.30pm.** An opportunity for members of Northern meditation groups to meet outside a formal retreat setting. There will be a 'pot-luck' lunch & afternoon tea (contributions invited). For more information, please ring Norman Trewhitt at Lancaster (0524) 69480.

**Discussion Weekend:** The topic of why women are a minority at the Priory was briefly discussed at the Groups' Weekend last November and it became clear that a full and proper discussion would need more time. So the weekend of June 15-17 has been set aside for this. Both men and women are invited but, because of the nature of the topic, we hope as many women as possible will come. The usual retreat schedule will be augmented by small discussion groups so that all can contribute, and there will be time for people to meet and talk informally together and with the monks. **Bookings must be made before May 26 1990.**

**Book Review:** *Sakyadhita: Daughters of the Buddha*, ed. Karma Lekshe Tsomo (New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1988). For those interested in the topic of women and Buddhism, this book offers informative reading. It is essentially an abridgement of the First International Conference of Buddhist Nuns held in India in 1978. As well as essays on the spiritual concerns of Buddhist nuns today, it gives an account of the history & practice of the Bhiksuni Sangha in various countries, has encouraging overviews of the longing and enthusiasm of



women for the spiritual life despite difficulties met, yet shows there is much work still to be done.

**Donations:** The community is grateful for donations of incense, candles, silk flowers, several Buddha statues, scrolls and pictures, two picture frames, a reading light, and a crystal bowl; various scriptures and books, postcards, tapes, and a slide projector; paint & brushes, stamps, office materials; soap, toiletries, infirmary supplies, mugs, and clothing; furniture, carpets, kitchen towels & utensils, a sewing machine; plants, bulbs, and shrubs; garden tools & gloves, plastic buckets; cement, porcelain & stainless steel wash-basins; and cat & dog food.

The Kitchen thanks the congregation for generous helpings of tea & coffee, bread & butter, chocolate, biscuits, sweets, and muesli; tempeh & tofu, fruit & vegetables, pasta, cereals, cheese, eggs, and beans; mince pies, marmalade, olives, cake & honey, nuts, Norfolk Punch, and Xmas puddings; a microwave; and a rare treat from the USA---'Bacobits.'

Donations received at The Reading Buddhist Priory include a microwave, a fridge, sacristy items, zabutons, tools, much food, and a car. The Prior wishes to thank the many people who are supporting the young Priory with such devotion and zeal.

**Begging Bowl:** The Sacristy requests 'silk' lotus flowers and buds (on stems) for the children to offer at the *Festival of the Buddha's Birth*; also, a hand-held, rechargeable vacuum cleaner. The Infirmary can use a stainless steel vacuum flask and the following herbs: rosehip, chamomile, comfrey leaves, coltsfoot, fenu-greek seeds, ginger, and golden seal root powder. The Bookshop can always make good use of packing materials, especially padded jiffy bags (used are fine), and plastic 'bubble' wrapping.

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### **Serene Reflection Meditation. New Edition**

This book gives a simple yet thorough introduction to the practise of meditation. Articles cover the physical aspects of how to sit, the mind of meditation and applying meditation to everyday life. The new edition has several new chapters including the Kyojukai-mon - the Giving and Receiving the Teaching of the Precepts - together with Reverend Master Jiyu-Kennett's commentary. Paperback, 101pp + photos.

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### **Video: Morning Service at Throssel Hole Priory**

An important aspect of life in the monastery is the daily cycle of ceremonies. The Priory day starts before dawn with sitting meditation, followed by the sounding of the Dawn Drum and the reciting of the scriptures by the monks and lay trainees separately. The whole community then comes together in the main ceremony hall for Morning Service which is the subject of this video. 20 mins.

Price: £11.00 (includes postage)

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